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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002041

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [CVIS](#) [PHUM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION 7750 VISA BAN -- JOSHUA DARIYE

REF: A. ABUJA 1927

[1](#)B. STATE 45499

Classified By: Ambassador John Campbell for Reasons 1.5 (B & D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Post is entering the name of Joshua Dariye, present Governor of Plateau State, into the visa system as P212F for corruption under Presidential Proclamation 7750. Part of the corruption case against Gov. Dariye has been made publicly by the GON, and the GON statement text was in Ref A.

In addition to that public GON case related to his not reporting illicit income and assets as required by Nigerian law, post believes Dariye has been involved in both extensive corruption and abetting communal violence in his state since becoming governor in 2003. Post expects extensive public comment from a visa ban on Dariye, who is akin to former Kenyan Minister Biwott in public notoriety for corruption and violence, albeit for fewer years. Also unlike Biwott, Dariye is of Nigeria's present ruling party, although President Obasanjo now seeks Dariye's impeachment and Obasanjo's Attorney General prepared the case above and made it public. Post will send SAO septel to revoke the tourist visa issued 10 December 2003 to Dariye. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Post has sent several reporting cables touching on Governor Dariye's involvement in corruption and violence. The GON has made the case publicly for Dariye's removal from office on corruption charges, and Nigeria's Attorney General said the only reason Dariye has not been charged with the crimes is the immunity of governors to prosecution under Nigeria's constitution. The charges in the Attorney General's public brief largely concern Dariye laundering illicit proceeds from corruption into assets in Nigeria and the UK, and not reporting those assets as required by Nigerian law. The UK detained Dariye for questioning concerning funds he was bringing in at Heathrow, and that incident is one of the foundations of the Attorney General's public accusations. Post believes the public charges by the GON against Dariye to be similar in weight to the GOK investigation report made public against Kenyan former minister Nicolas Biwott, and sufficient on their own to warrant Dariye's exclusion and visa ineligibility under Presidential Proclamation 7750.

[1](#)3. (C) Also like Biwott, the reasons for action against Dariye go much further than the publicly made charges. Dariye is widely believed to have been stealing funds from the Plateau State government and its constituent Local Government Areas, and post tends to agree. GON Finance Minister Ngozi has publicly accused more than one governor, whom she refused to name, of such theft. Moreover, it seems likely that some of the money stolen was used to foment communal violence in Plateau state that claimed hundreds of lives in 2003 and 2004.

[1](#)4. (C) Essentially, Dariye has used existing competition over land and water rights between cattlemen and dirt farmers in his state to build his own political base. The cattlemen and dirt farmers mostly are of two different ethnic groups. Dariye publicly urged one of the ethnic groups to leave his state, and privately appears to have urged the other ethnic group to throw them out. Hundreds died in attacks and counterattacks within the state. And because one of the groups is almost entirely Muslim while the other is predominantly Christian, a massacre of Muslims within Plateau state led to attacks by Muslims in other states, notably Kano, on Christians in general that left hundreds more dead and injured. President Obasanjo then declared a state of emergency in Plateau, and accused Dariye of doing nothing to stop the violence. Indeed, Dariye's public call for one ethnic group to leave his state probably instigated some of the violence.

EXPECTED REACTIONS

[1](#)5. (C) As with the Biwott ban in Kenya, action against Dariye will be a very public stand against corruption and violence. Also as with Biwott, some will see it as taking political sides -- although in this case it would be taking the government's side against a member of the ruling party, instead of against a prominent opposition party member. Obasanjo has been working to engineer the Plateau State Assembly's impeachment of Dariye. The Attorney General's public statement accusing Dariye of corruption and other violations of Nigerian law is part of that effort. But the

corruption accusations stand on their own merits, and in our view merit the ban on their own.

16. (C) We expect the visa ban on Dariye, and revocation of his 24-month tourist visa, to be controversial in any case. Dariye and Obasanjo are both Christians, which should dampen any objections that a visa ban on Dariye is religiously motivated. Thus our public diplomacy strategy will be similar to what we have seen of the Biwott ban:

-- While we will note the Attorney General's public accusation of specific corruption acts by Dariye, we will not address the reasons or process for his ban under Presidential Proclamation 7750.

-- We will emphasize that the Dariye action is part of an overall effort to deter corruption world-wide.

17. (C) In addition, we will note that the U.S. and Nigeria agreed in the Sea Island Summit's Nigeria-G8 Compact, signed by Presidents Bush and Obasanjo this past June on transparency and anti-corruption, to deny safe haven to public officials guilty of corruption by denying them entry.
CAMPBELL